WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for determining an axle geometry by recording and evaluating a topographical image of a face of a wheel fitted to an axle, comprising:

projecting light spread over an area with a coding spread over the area onto the face of the wheel from a projecting direction;

recording the light reflected from the face of the wheel with an image converter as a topographical image, from a direction other than the light projecting direction;

determining three-dimensional surface coordinates for the topographical image of the face of the wheel from the recorded light; and

evaluating the topographical image in relation to a reference system.

- 2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the coding comprises striated patterns with varying periodicity or monochrome lattice structures.
- A method according to claim 1, wherein the coding comprises a color coding.
- 4. A method according to claim 1, wherein a video camera is used as the image converter.

5.	A method according to claim 1, wherein the surface coordinates are
determined th	nrough triangulation.

- 6. A method according to claim 1, wherein the topographical image includes the entire face of the wheel.
- 7. A method according to claim 1, wherein the topographical image is embodied in the form of a ring and includes a face of a tire cover.
- 8. A method according to claim 1, wherein the topographical image includes at least one partial area of a face of a tire cover to be detected.
- 9. A method according to claim 1, wherein several images of a rotating wheel are recorded.
- 10. A method according to claim 9, wherein the wheel carries out at least one full rotation to determine a reference plane.
- 11. A method according to claim 1, wherein a normal vector of the wheel is used for determining the axle geometry.

- 12. A method according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the camber of the wheel and the track of the wheel is determined via a normal vector of the wheel.
- 13. A method according to claim 1, wherein in addition to determining the axle geometry, further properties of at least one of the wheel, a rim, and a tire cover are determined.
- 14. A method according to claim 1, wherein in addition to determining the axle geometry, further properties of vehicle body areas adjoining the wheel are determined.
- 15. A method according to claim 14, wherein the further properties of vehicle body areas comprise a position of the wheel arch edge.
- 16. A method according to claim 1, wherein in addition to the topographical image of the face of the wheel, color variants of the face of the wheel are detected.
- 17. A method according to claim 1, wherein the reference system is a coordinate system of a vehicle.

- 18. A method according to claim 1, wherein the image converter is a charge-coupled device or a complementary metal-oxide semiconductor color camera.
- 19. A sensor for determining an axle geometry by recording and evaluating a topographical image of a face of a wheel fitted to an axle, comprising:

a light projection unit which projects light spread over an area with a coding spread over the area onto the face of the wheel from a projecting direction;

an image converter which records the light reflected from the face of the wheel as a topographical image, from a direction other than the projecting direction; and

an evaluation unit which determines three-dimensional surface coordinates for the topographical image of the face of the wheel and which determines an axle geometry.

- 20. A sensor according to claim 19, wherein the light projection unit projects light with a coding comprising striated patterns with varying periodicity, or monochrome lattice structures.
- 21. A sensor according to claim 19, wherein the light projection unit projects light with a coding comprising color coding.

- 22. A sensor according to claim 19, wherein the image converter comprises a video camera.
- 23. A sensor according to claim 19, wherein the evaluation unit determines the surface coordinates through triangulation.
- 24. A sensor according to claim 19, wherein the evaluation unit determines at least one of the camber of the wheel and the track of the wheel via a normal vector of the wheel.
- 25. A sensor according to claim 19, wherein the evaluation unit, in addition to determining the axle geometry, determines further properties of at least one of the wheel, a rim, and a tire cover.
- 26. A sensor according to claim 19, wherein the evaluation unit, in addition to determining the axle geometry, determines further properties of vehicle body areas adjoining the wheel.
- 27. A sensor according to claim 26, wherein the further properties of vehicle body areas comprise a position of the wheel arch edge.

- 28. A sensor according to claim 19, wherein the evaluation unit also detects color variants of the face of the wheel.
- 29. A sensor according to claim 19, wherein the evaluation unit evaluates the three-dimensional surface coordinates for the topographical image of the face of the wheel in relation to a reference system.
- 30. A sensor according to claim 29, wherein the reference system is a coordinate system of a vehicle.
- 31. A sensor according to claim 19, wherein the sensor determines an axle geometry by recording and evaluating a topographical image of a face of a rotating wheel fitted to an axle.
- 32. A sensor according to claim 19, wherein the image converter is a charge-coupled device or a complementary metal-oxide semiconductor color camera.